

Dasasloki
of
Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada
(English translation by S.N.Sastri)

Introduction

It is said that the Dasasloki was composed by Sri Sankara spontaneously when Sri Govindapada, whom he approached with a request to be accepted as a disciple, asked him who he was. The ten slokas which have become famous as 'Dasasloki' were Sri Sankara's answer to this question. The gist of these slokas is that he is the pure Atma devoid of the limiting adjuncts in the form of the body, mind and organs.

न भूमिर्न तोयं न तेजो न वायु-

र्न खं नेन्द्रियं वा न तेषां समूहः।

अनैकान्तिकत्वात्सुषुप्त्येकसिद्ध-

स्तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम्॥१

1. I am not the element earth, nor water, nor fire, nor air, nor ether, nor any of the organs individually, nor all the elements or organs together as a whole. Because of variability (of the limiting adjuncts in the states of waking and dream), the self exists by itself only in deep sleep (without the limiting adjuncts in the form of the senses, mind, etc.). I am that most auspicious, attributeless, non-dual entity who alone remains (when all duality is negated).

Note. In this verse the view of the Charvakas (materialists) that there is no self or Atma different from the body is rejected. The Charvaka system does not accept the existence of a soul different from the body. There are various sub-divisions in the Charvaka school itself. One school holds that the physical body itself is the self, another that the sense organs are the self, yet another that the mind is the self. All these are rejected by Advaita. According to Advaita the individual self, which is identical with Brahman, is devoid of all qualities and is neither a doer nor an experiencer. In the waking state the mind, sense and physical body function with the consciousness derived from the Atma. In the dream state the physical body and senses do not function, but the mind functions and creates various objects. In the deep sleep state the mind too is dormant and the Atma alone is there. In this state also there is experience of happiness and total ignorance of everything, as is proved by the fact that when a person wakes up from sleep he or she says, "I slept happily, I did not know anything". This proves that the Atma, which is pure consciousness, exists in the deep sleep state also. In this state there is nothing but the Atma. The world of duality is only a superimposition on Brahman due to avidya. When selfknowledge arises, this avidya is destroyed and the self alone remains, which can

never be negated. This self is pure consciousness, attributeless, and auspicious.

न वर्णा न वर्णाश्रमाचारधर्म
न मे धारणाध्यानयोगादयोऽपि।

अनात्माश्रयाहंममाध्यासहानात्
तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम्॥२

2. Neither the division into castes and stages of life, nor the rules of conduct and duties of the various castes and stages of life apply to me. I have no need for dharana, dhyana or yoga, etc. Since the notions of 'I' and 'mine' which are due to identification with the not-self (body, mind and organs) have gone, I remain as the one auspicious self free from all attributes".

न माता पिता वा न देवा न लोका
न वेदा न यज्ञा न तीर्थं ब्रुवन्ति।
सुषुप्तौ निरस्तातिशून्यात्मकत्वात्
तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम्॥३

3. The srutis say that in deep sleep there is no mother, nor father, nor gods, nor the worlds, nor the Vedas, nor sacrifices, nor holy places. Nor is there total void, since I exist then as the one auspicious self free from all attributes".

Since the notions of caste, stage of life, etc., are based only on false knowledge (which results in identification with the body, etc.), it is pointed out that when that (false knowledge) is not there, such notions also do not exist, as in the state of deep sleep.

This sloka is based on the Brihadaranyaka upanishad which says that in the state of deep sleep the father cease to be a father, the mother ceases to be a mother, a thief is no thief, etc.

न सांख्यं न शैवं न तत्पाञ्चरात्रं
न जैनं न मीमांसकादेर्मतं वा।
विशिष्टानुभूत्या विशुद्धात्मकत्वात्
तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम्॥४

4. Neither the Sankhya view, nor the Saiva, nor the Pancharatra, nor the Jaina nor the Mimamsaka view, etc., is tenable. Because of the realization of the partless Brahman generated by the Mahavakya, Brahman is absolutely pure (untainted). I remain as the one auspicious self free from all attributes.

न चोर्ध्वं न चाधो न चान्तर्न बाह्यं
न मध्यं न तिर्यङ् न पूर्वापरा दिक्।

वियद्व्यापकत्वादखण्डैकरूप-

स्तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम्॥५

5. Brahman has no such thing as upper or lower (part), it has no inside or outside, it has no middle or any 'across', and it has no eastern or western direction, because it is all-pervading like space (or pervades space also). It is one and without parts. I remain as the one auspicious self free from all attributes.

न शुक्लं न कृष्णं न रक्तं न पीतं

न कुब्जं न पीनं न ह्रस्वं न दीर्घम्।

अरूपं तथा ज्योतिराकारकत्वात्

तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम्॥६

6. Brahman is not white, nor black, nor red, nor yellow; it is not tiny, nor big. It is neither short nor long. It is not knowable since it is of the nature of effulgence. I remain as the one auspicious self free from all attributes".

न शास्ता न शास्त्रं न शिष्यो न शिक्षा

न च त्वं न चाहं न वायं प्रपञ्चः।

स्वरूपावबोधो विकल्पासहिष्णु-

स्तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम्॥७

7. There is neither teacher nor scriptures, neither student nor instruction, neither you nor I, nor this world. The knowledge of one's real nature does not admit of different perceptions. I remain as the one auspicious self free from all attributes".

न जाग्रन्न मे स्वप्नको वा सुषुप्तिः

न विश्वो न वा तैजसः प्राज्ञको वा।

अविद्यात्मकत्वात्त्रयाणां तुरीय-

स्तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम्॥८

8. I do not have the state of waking, nor of dream, nor of deep sleep. I am not Visva, or Taijasa, or Praajna. Because all these three states are only the products of ignorance, I am the fourth (beyond these three states). I remain as the one auspicious self free from all attributes".

Note. Visva is the name given to the jiva in the waking state, Taijasa in the dream state, and Praajna in the deep sleep state.

अपि व्यापकत्वाद्धितत्वप्रयोगात्

स्वतःसिद्धभावादनन्याश्रयत्वात्।

जगत्तुच्छमेतत्समस्तं तदन्यत्

तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम्॥९

9. The Atma is all-pervading, is the desired goal, is self-existent, and is not dependent on any thing else, while the entire universe which is different from it is unreal. I remain as the one auspicious self free from all attributes.

न चैकं तदन्यद् द्वितीयं कुतः स्यात्

न वा केवलत्वं न चाकेवलत्वम् ।

न शून्यं न चाशून्यमद्वैतकत्वात्

कथं सर्ववेदान्तसिद्धं ब्रवीमि ॥ १०

10. It is not one; how can there be a second different from it? It has neither absoluteness nor non-absoluteness. It is neither void nor non-void since it is devoid of duality. How can I describe that which is the essence of the entire Vedanta!"
